

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**Kindly replace the claims with the following:**

1. (Currently amended) A method of encoding (2) a signal (S) to obtain a bit-stream (V,TS), the method comprising the steps of:

providing (12,13) blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ); and  
attenuating (19) higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of a given block more than lower-frequency transform coefficients of the given block, said attenuating comprises the step of:

quantizing (19) the transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of the given block with a curve (QC) having higher quantization steps ( $Q_{ADD}$ ) for higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), without putting information concerning said curve (QC) into the bit-stream (V,TS).

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[2]] 1, further comprising the step of:

shifting (19,21) the curve (QC) to adjust a bit rate (R) of the bit-stream (V,TS).

4. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[2]] 1, further comprising the step of:

multiplying (19,21) the curve (QC) to adjust a bit rate (R) of the bit-stream (V,TS).

5. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[2]] 1, wherein the signal (S) comprises intra-coded and predictively coded pictures, the method comprising the step of:

quantizing (19,21) predictively coded pictures at an end of a prediction sequence more coarsely than predictively coded pictures at a start of the prediction sequence.

6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising the steps of:

decoding (14,15) the blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) to obtain a reconstructed picture rather than decoding (14,15) the attenuated (19) high-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ).

7. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising:

attenuating (19) high frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) in a plurality of blocks, wherein the blocks are adaptively attenuated depending on their content.

8. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein chrominance blocks are less attenuated (19) than luminance blocks.

9. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein blocks with an energy content higher than other blocks are less attenuated (19) than the other blocks.

10. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one selected high-frequency transform coefficient ( $C_i$ ) is not attenuated (19).

11. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the at least one selected high-frequency transform coefficient ( $C_i$ ) has a frequency higher than a given frequency threshold and an amplitude higher than a given amplitude threshold.

12. (Currently amended) A device (2) for encoding a signal (S) to obtain a bit-stream (V,TS), comprising:

means (12,13) for providing blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ); and

means (19) for attenuating high-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of a given block by quantizing (19) the transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of the given block with a curve (QC) having higher quantization steps ( $Q_{ADD}$ ) for higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), without putting information concerning said curve (QC) into the bit-stream (V,TS).

13. (Currently amended) A transmitter (1) comprising:

means (10) for obtaining a signal (S); and

a device (2) for encoding the signal (S) comprising:

means (12,13) for providing blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ); and

means (19) for attenuating high-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of a given block by quantizing (19) the transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of the given block with a curve (QC) having higher quantization steps ( $Q_{ADD}$ ) for higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), without putting information concerning said curve (QC) into the bit-stream (V,TS).~~as claimed in claim 12.~~

14. (Currently amended) A method of transcoding (5) an encoded signal (TS1,V1), comprising the steps of:

decoding (50,51) the encoded signal (TS1,V1) to obtain blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ); and

attenuating (52) high-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of a given block by quantizing (19) the transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of the given block with a curve (QC) having higher quantization steps ( $Q_{ADD}$ ) for higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), without putting information concerning said curve (QC) into the bit-stream (V,TS).

15. (Currently amended) A bit rate transcoder (5) for transcoding an encoded signal (TS1,V1) comprising:

means (50,51) for decoding the encoded signal (TS1,V1) to obtain blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ); and

means for attenuating (52) high-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of a given block by quantizing (19) the transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of the given block with a curve (QC) having higher quantization steps ( $Q_{ADD}$ ) for higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), without putting information concerning said curve (QC) into the bit-stream (V,TS).

16. (Original) A bit rate transcoder (7) as claimed in claim 15, the bit rate transcoder (7) further comprising:

means (70,72) for re-quantizing the quantized transform coefficients to obtain re-quantized coefficients; and

a feedback loop (73-78,71) for compensating a re-quantization error;

the means for attenuating (52) being arranged to attenuate high-frequency coefficients in blocks of the re-quantized coefficients.

17. (Currently amended) A receiver (3) comprising:

means (4,50) for obtaining an encoded signal (TS1,V1); and

a bit rate transcoder (5) for transcoding the encoded signal (TS1,V1)

comprising:

means (50,51) for decoding the encoded signal (TS1,V1) to obtain blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ); and

means for attenuating (52) high-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of a given block by quantizing (19) the transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of the given block with a curve (QC) having higher quantization steps ( $Q_{ADD}$ ) for higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), without putting information concerning said curve (QC) into the bit-stream (V,TS).

~~as claimed in claim 15.~~

18. (Currently amended) A bit-stream (V,TS,V2,TS2) comprising blocks of quantized transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), wherein high-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of a given block have been attenuated by quantizing (19) the transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ) of the given block with a curve (QC) having higher quantization steps ( $Q_{ADD}$ ) for higher-frequency transform coefficients ( $C_i$ ), without putting information concerning said curve (QC) into the bit-stream (V,TS).

19. (Original) A storage medium (6) on which a bit-stream (V,TS,V2,TS2) as claimed in claim 18 is stored.